

## **FREIGHT AND GOODS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (FGTS) UPDATE**

### **BRIEFING PAPER**

Prepared for the  
February 2004 Transportation Commission Meeting

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### **PURPOSE:**

The Transportation Commission is requested to review a summary of the Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) 2003 Update, which covers state and local roads that carry more than 4 million tons per year (T-1 and T-2 designations). At the March meeting, the Commission will be presented with the entire report and asked to adopt the update prior to its presentation to the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB). FMSIB uses FGTS information to designate statewide strategic freight corridors.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 1993, the legislature enacted RCW 47.05.021 directing the Transportation Commission to designate a freight and goods transportation system (FGTS). In its current form, FGTS is a roadway ranking system based on freight tonnage carried annually. The Commission adopted the first report in October 1994. In 1998, the legislature created the FMSIB (RCW Chapter 47.06A) to designate strategic freight corridors and review and recommend funding for the most strategic freight mobility projects. A resolution was signed in November of 1998 by the Commission and FMSIB jointly adopting the 1998 FGTS update.

In 2000, a state appropriation was given to the County Road Administration Board (CRAB) directing them to develop a County Freight and Goods System (CFGS) to provide data consistent with WSDOT's FGTS for state highways. The 2001 FGTS update included CFGS county road tonnage data and available city street data. The 2003 FGTS update, presented to the Commission this month, contains the most up-to-date tonnage data available for state highways, county roads, and city streets.

### **DISCUSSION:**

FGTS ranks roadways using 5 freight tonnage classifications, T-1 through T-5, as follows:

T-1	more than 10 million tons per year
T-2	4 million to 10 million tons per year
T-3	300,000 to 4 million tons per year
T-4	100,000 to 300,000 tons per year
T-5	20,000 tons in 60 days

Only those roads carrying more than 4 million tons of freight per year (T-1 and T-2) are eligible for designation as strategic freight corridors per RCW 47.06A.010, with case-by-case exceptions by FMSIB. The 2001 and 2003 FGTS updates include revised and updated information for T-1 and T-2 roadways only, noting any changes in status between T-2/T-3 and T-1/T-2 routes. Information for T-3, T-4, and T-5 state and county roads was not updated in 2001 or 2003. Data received in 2003 from cities for T-3 through T-5 streets was included when it was submitted.

There has been very little change overall in T-1 and T-2 tonnage classifications from 2001 to 2003. A total of 131 centerline miles changed FGTS designation in 2003, resulting in a net gain of 42 miles in the T-1/T-2 set since 2001. 13.5 miles were elevated from T-2 to T-1; 78 miles were elevated from T-3 to T-2; and 36 miles dropped from T-2 to T-3. No state highways dropped from T-1 status to T-2. Erroneous distance entries in the database account for the remaining 3.5 miles. T-1 and T-2 roadways account for 34 percent of all state highway centerline miles.

Several areas where a 2001 designation had been made by assumption rather than data were verified by newly-collected 2003 data. One notable new assumption made in 2003 is on SR 12, from SR 122/Silver Creek to Packwood. This 50-mile road segment was a T-2 in 2001, but 2003 data show that its freight tonnage dropped to 3.36 million tons, currently making it a T-3. The reason for this change is attributed to closure of the Packwood lumber mill. The mill was shut down but not decommissioned and it is anticipated that a change in federal timber harvesting laws will eventually cause the mill to be operational again. Because the road segment continues to carry substantial freight tonnage even with the mill closure, staff recommend keeping it at the T-2 designation in the 2003 update. This segment will be revisited during the next FGTS update in 2005.

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) and the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) contributed to the 2003 FGTS update by contributing data or asking their members to contribute to WSDOT directly. For the first time, the 2003 update will include an analysis of county road segments and miles that have been added, subtracted or changed in the T-1 and T-2 designations. Details from city street data are insufficient to allow for a similar analysis. As is the case with state roads, county FGTS miles and designations have changed little since the 2001 update.

WSDOT has no mandated interval for FGTS updates, but FMSIB is required by statute to update the list of designated of strategic freight corridors not less than every two years (RCW 47.06A.020(3)). WSDOT is directed to provide staff support to FMSIB (RCW 47.06A.040), so at a minimum, WSDOT updates the list of T-1 and T-2 roadways every two years to assist in strategic freight corridor designation.

New features of the 2003 FGTS Update include a table of T-1 and T-2 state roads sorted by county, a breakdown of changes since 2001 at the county level, and an electronic format. Previous editions' data were sorted only by state route number, and detailed maps were not posted to a publicly-accessible website due to size constraints. The 2003 FGTS update can be inexpensively reproduced on CD-ROM, allowing detailed maps to be easily distributed to cities, counties, metropolitan and regional transportation planning organizations (MPOs/RTPOs), lawmakers and policy makers, and other interested parties. The production and distribution of the new FGTS will take place after review and adoption by FMSIB in April of 2004.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

No action is requested at this time. WSDOT will recommend in March that the Commission adopt the 2003 FGTS Update.

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